Department for Education

School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool Checklist

Reference AF406197542

Organisation details

Company number:	**7645701**
Trust name:	**Michaela Community Schools Trust**

Summary of Questions and Answers

Governance		
Question 1	Have the Chief Financial Officer, Accounting Officer and chair of trustees read the current edition of the Academy Trust Handbook (also known as the Academies Financial Handbook) (hereafter 'Academy Trust Handbook')?	Yes
Question 1a	Do they understand their role in complying with the trust's charitable objects, with company and charity law, and with the funding agreement?	Yes
Question 2	Has the board assessed its composition during the year in terms of skills, effectiveness, leadership and impact? Skills audit conducted Spring 2021	Yes
Question 3	Does the board have a plan in place to address any gaps in its capabilities through recruitment, induction, training or other development activity?	In Part

Question 4	Has the board appointed the senior executive leader as accounting officer?	Yes
Question 4a	Has the board assured itself that the senior leader has appropriate skills to fulfil their role as accounting officer in accordance with the financial responsibilities of the duty to the public purse?	Yes
Question 5	Has the board appointed a qualified and/or experienced chief financial officer? School Finance Manager has been appointed as CFO, no technical qualification but support available from MLG Education Services if required.	Yes
Question 6	Has the board appointed a governance professional who is someone other than a trustee, principal or chief executive of the trust? The School Finance Manager, who is also an experienced Governance Professional (Clerk), has been appointed to the role.	Yes
Question 7	How many times has the board met in the last year?	6
Question 8	Has the trust held an Annual General Meeting (AGM) with members in the last 12 months?	No
Question 8a	Please provide details of any alternative arrangements for communicating with members. Until recently there was 100% overlap between governors and members. Meeting of members planned for this academic year.	
Question 9	Has the board approved a written scheme of financial delegations? Included in the new Finance Policy	Yes

Question 10	Does the trust have a finance committee (or equivalent) with clear terms of reference and a knowledgeable and experienced chair? Where the finance committee and audit and risk committee are separate, the chair should not be the same.	In Part
Question 11	Does the trust have an audit and risk committee?	Yes, it's combined with another committee
Question 11a	Does the audit and risk committee reflect minimum good practice by precluding employees from its membership? HT and DHT attend the audit meeting as it is part of the December FGB but do not have a vote for this part of the proceedings.	Yes
Question 11b	How many times has the audit and risk committee met in the last 12 months?	1
Question 12	Are trustees assured that regular risk assessment process is in place, and that mitigations planned are appropriate/interrogated?	In Part
Question 13	Does the academy trust operate in accordance with all of the requirements in the Academy Trust Handbook to identify and avoid conflicts of interest, and to report and manage and related party transactions? Annual declarations completed, register updated after every FGB meeting, any conflicts of interest for a meeting declared at the start of the meeting.	Yes
Question 14	Has the trust published its governance arrangements on its website in accordance with the Academy Trust Handbook?	Yes
Trust financial strategy		
Question 15	Has the board of trustees carried out a going concern assessment of the trust to inform the basis of the preparation for financial statements? Completed by the appointed auditors	Yes

Question 15a	Can the board clearly evidence the information and data used to inform this assessment and the assumptions made? Information from annual accounts	Yes
Question 16	Can the trust evidence that its 3-year financial forecast has been reviewed by the trustees before approval?	No
Question 17	Can the trust evidence that trustees have taken financial performance in previous years into account (for example, adjustments for areas of significant underspend or overspend)?	Yes
Question 18	Are the assumptions behind the 3-year forecast, including pupil number projections, documented?	In Part
Question 19	If a cumulative deficit has been forecast within the 3-year budget, is there a plan to mitigate it?	Not Applicable
Question 20	Is the financial strategy integrated with the trust's strategy for raising standards and attainment? Key strategy for raising standards is the appointment and retention of excellent teachers, provision made in the budget	Yes
Question 21	Does the trust survey its physical estate and ensure appropriate capital provision in budget setting? Now that all major capital projects to develop the building are completed, capital provision will be reserved for maintenance projects.	Yes
Question 21a	Are trustees aware of their duties under health and safety legislation?	In Part
Question 22	Does the trust have an appropriate business continuity or disaster recovery plan, including an up-to-date asset register and adequate insurance?	In Part

Setting the Annual Budget

Question 23	Does the trust set a well-informed and balanced budget which is approved, in advance, by the board?	Yes
Question 24	Does the budget setting process allow sufficient time for the trust board to scrutinise and challenge the information provided?	In Part
Question 25	Do trustees challenge pupil number assumptions and can the trust move quickly to recast the budget if the projections and reality are materially different?	In Part
Question 26	Is end year outturn in line with budget projections, or if not, is the trust board alerted to significant variations in a timely manner, and do they result from planned changes or from genuinely unforeseeable circumstances?	Yes
Question 27	Are balances at a reasonable level and does the trust have a clear plan for using the money it plans to hold in balance at the end of each year?	Yes
Staffing		
Question 28	Does the trust review and challenge its staffing structure regularly to ensure it is the best structure to meet the needs of the trust whilst maintaining financial integrity? SLT keep staffing under close scrutiny, HT reports to governors. Staffing as a proportion of GAG income included in budget.	Yes
Question 29	Is the pay of senior leaders tightly correlated to strong educational outcomes and sound financial management?	Yes
Question 30	Does the trust benchmark the size of its senior leadership team annually against that of similar schools?	In Part
Question 31	Has the academy trust published on its website the number of employees whose total benefits exceeded £100k?	Yes
Value for money		

Question 32	Does the trust benchmark its income and expenditure and that of its schools annually against that of similar trusts and schools and investigate further where any category appears to be out of line? SBM checks the bench marking data provided by the DfE for any anomalies. Will share bench marking data with Finance Governors in the future.	Yes
Question 33	Has the trust considered the results of the self-assessment dashboard or other DfE benchmarking tools?	Yes
Question 34	Does the trust have procedures for purchasing goods and services that both meet legal requirements and secure value for money? New Procurement Policy approved in the autumn term	Yes
Question 35	Are the trustees given the opportunity to challenge their staff's plans for replacing contracts for goods and services that are due to expire shortly? According to the limits set by the Procurement Policy	Yes
Question 36	Does the trust consider collaboration with others, for example on sharing staff or joint purchasing, where that would improve value for money?	No
Question 37	Does the trust compare its non-staff expenditure against the DfE approved frameworks to ensure you are achieving best value for money?	No
Protecting public money		
Question 38	Are the trustees sure that there are no outstanding matters from audit reports?	Yes
Question 39	Are the internal scrutiny arrangements, as defined in the Academy Trust Handbook, adhered to?	Yes

Question 40	Does the trust regularly review its internal control arrangements to safeguard against fraud and theft, and cybercrime by staff, contractors, suppliers and other third parties?	Yes
Question 41	Are all staff aware of the trust's whistleblowing arrangements and to whom they should report concerns?	Yes
Question 42	Does the trust have an accounting system that is adequate and properly run and delivers accurate reports, including the required returns to ESFA?	Yes

Action plan

Governance

Question 3	**Does the board have a plan in place to address any gaps in its capabilities through recruitment, induction, training or other development activity?**
Action planned	Good coverage of skills, board is looking to expand when the new school opens
Target date	01/09/2023
Question 8	**Has the trust held an Annual General Meeting (AGM) with members in the last 12 months?**
Action planned	Until recently there was 100% overlap between governors and members. Meeting of members planned for this academic year.
Question 10	**Does the trust have a finance committee (or equivalent) with clear terms of reference and a knowledgeable and experienced chair? Where the finance committee and audit and risk committee are separate, the chair should not be the same.**
Action planned	Finance Governors appointed by the board but have an advisory role only so no terms of reference required.

Target date	31/07/2022
Question 12	**Are trustees assured that regular risk assessment process is in place, and that mitigations planned are appropriate/interrogated?**
Action planned	Formal Risk Register is underway and will be brought to FGB meeting on 29.03.22 for comment
Target date	29/03/2022

Trust financial strategy

Question 16	**Can the trust evidence that its 3-year financial forecast has been reviewed by the trustees before approval?**
Action planned	No 3 year forecast produced last year. 3 year forecast to be included as part of the budgeting process this year, will be presented to governors at summer term FGB
Target date	31/07/2022
Question 18	**Are the assumptions behind the 3-year forecast, including pupil number projections, documented?**
Action planned	They will be reported to governors in the summer
Target date	31/07/2022
Question 21a	**Are trustees aware of their duties under health and safety legislation?**
Action planned	HT/Operations Manager have delegated responsibility. Something to consider further?
Target date	31/07/2022

Question 22	**Does the trust have an appropriate business continuity or disaster recovery plan, including an up-to-date asset register and adequate insurance?**
Action planned	Operations Manager is working on BCP, we do hold an up to date asset register and adequate insurance
Target date	31/07/2022

Setting the Annual Budget

Question 24	**Does the budget setting process allow sufficient time for the trust board to scrutinise and challenge the information provided?**
Action planned	Will try to start the process earlier this year to enable Finance Governors time to scrutinise the budget and report to other governors
Target date	31/07/2022
Question 25	**Do trustees challenge pupil number assumptions and can the trust move quickly to recast the budget if the projections and reality are materially different?**
Action planned	Has not been relevant until the opening of the sixth form as always oversubscribed in the main school.
Target date	31/07/2022

Staffing

Question 30	**Does the trust benchmark the size of its senior leadership team annually against that of similar schools?**
Action planned	Not annually, the structure has remained the same since the school was full.
Target date	31/07/2022

Value for money

Question 36	**Does the trust consider collaboration with others, for example on sharing staff or joint purchasing, where that would improve value for money?**
Action planned	This will happen when the new school opens
Target date	01/09/2023
Question 37	**Does the trust compare its non-staff expenditure against the DfE approved frameworks to ensure you are achieving best value for money?**
Action planned	We use other methods to ensure value for money
Target date	31/07/2022

Your details

Name:	Mrs Alison Mansfield
Email address:	amansfield@mcsbrent.co.uk
Telephone number	07753865646

Accounting officer details

Name	K Birbalsingh
Role of accounting officer	executive principal

Declaration

The information submitted in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

I confirm that the accounting officer has been sighted on the information being submitted and arrangements are being established of the trust to move towards compliance with the mandatory requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook.

I confirm that the trust board has been sighted on the information being submitted and has approved this. (If not, please ensure that this is shared with the trustees at the next trust board)

Submission date:

14 March 2022